

# Seattle Permits

— part of a multi-departmental City of Seattle series on getting a permit

## Resolving Right of Way Permit Disagreements

At the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) we are committed to continuously improving our customer service and responsiveness. Our stakeholders have told us that quickly clearing up disagreements about the permit process and policy or technical issues will reduce delays in permitting. We agree and have taken steps to ensure that we promptly address any disagreements you may have about how your application is proceeding or how the requirements apply to your project. In the long term, we believe our prompt attention to resolving disagreements will reduce correction requests, enhance follow-through on agreements, and improve both plan quality and plan review consistency.

### Background

Seattle's development regulations, including right of way requirements, are complex. Requirement language can be ambiguous for some situations, and very specific for others. The more specific the language is, the less flexible our response to a particular project can be. Conversely, the more ambiguous the language, the more broad our interpretation may be.

Achieving the right balance between flexibility and consistency is a constant dilemma in developing regulatory policies. It is not unexpected therefore, that in some cases applicants may disagree with a SDOT plan reviewer or inspector about how the requirements are being applied to a specific circumstance or how the process is being administered to a particular project.

### Our Response

To assist in resolving disagreements, we are re-emphasizing quick resolution with our Street Use supervisors and manager and clarifying the process by which disagreements are resolved. We recognize

that issues arise both during plan review and inspection and have identified separate contacts for each of those processes.

### How to Resolve a Disagreement

If you disagree with assigned staff within 10 days of permit issuance about how a process problem will be resolved or about how a policy or technical issue affects a specific project, you may ask the assigned staff person's supervisor to review the situation. You may find the appropriate supervisor by referring to the list below or by asking the assigned staff person for the supervisor's name and phone number. If the supervisor is not immediately available, that supervisor will return your call within the next business day. The supervisor will talk with you about your disagreement and your desired resolution. After appropriate consideration, usually within a day, the supervisor will provide you with a verbal answer.

### Private Contracts Street Improvements

Shobuz Ikbali (206) 615-0774

### Utility Permitting

Rex Stratton (206) 684-5193

### Annual Permitting

Benita Staadecker (206) 684-5267

### Street Use Permitting

Keith Miller (206) 684-5275

### Downtown Inspection

Ray Barnes (206) 615-0769

### North & South District Inspection

Tamera Duke (206) 684-5271

**Street Use Fax Number:** (206) 684-5347

[www.seattle.gov/transportation](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation)



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Seattle Department of Transportation

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(206) 684-ROAD (7623)

If the supervisor's answer is one that you continue to disagree with and you feel the decision does not correctly apply to your project, you may request review of the issue by writing to the appropriate manager. Please send your letter Richard Richmire, Manager, c/o SDOT - Street Use Division, 700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3900, PO Box 34996, Seattle, WA 98124-4996.

A written response will be made by the manager, usually within two weeks of the request, unless additional, time-consuming research, analysis or discussion is required. The manager will involve the assigned staff and supervisor to gain full understanding of the situation and inform them of the final resolution.

Should all the attempts to resolve the dispute with the manager be exhausted, you may request that the Director of SDOT or his/her designee review your permit or application in an Administrative Review Meeting.

A request for an Administrative Review must be submitted in writing to the Director of SDOT. The Director of SDOT will provide a written response within thirty (30) days of receipt of the written request for review.